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THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, PRINCETON, N. J.

By Cortlandt Van Rensselaer. Sept. 1844

See v. 2, p. 460 of Life of Dr. Samuel Miller

PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

An appeal is now made to the Presbyterian churches to assist in the endowment of the Theological Seminary at Princeton. The Agent feels called upon to give to the public a statement of the objects of the Institution, its history, and its claims upon the Churches.

I. The great design of the Theological Seminary at Princeton is to train up men for the ministry, who shall understand, love, propagate and defend the system of religion which is set forth in the standards of the Presbyterian Church—and thus extend the influence of true evangelical piety and Gospel order throughout the world.

The objects, secured by the Seminary, are of vast importance to the Presbyterian Church, and to the general interests of religion:

1. It affords to students, preparing for the ministry, peculiar facilities for the acquisition of Biblical, Theological, and general knowledge. The instructions at Princeton are thorough and comprehensive; and adapted, as far as human means can go, to educate a ministry in the knowledge and love of the truth.*

2. It promotes the cultivation of personal piety, by means of the influences brought to bear in connexion with religious studies, devotional exercises, exhortations, personal example, and the general training of an evangelical Institution.

3. It forms and cements friendships among ministers.

4. It offers to pious and indigent young men the opportunity of obtaining their education without charge; the instructions in the Seminary being gratuitous, and a number of scholarships being provided for the support of the deserving.

5. It keeps alive and fosters the missionary spirit. This is made a prominent subject in the instructions of the Seminary. These instructions are enforced by the example and influence of students who design to be missionaries, and by the correspondence of those who are already in the field.

6. It secures a religious literature of great importance to the Church and the world.

One of the incidental advantages of a public institution is its distinguished authorship. Luther, Calvin, Melancthon, Beza, Tur-

* As various allusions are made to the Professors in this appeal, it is proper to state that it was drawn up without their knowledge.

retine, Pictet, Witsius, Ridgeley, Brown of Haddington, Dick, Hill, Dwight, Chalmers, Merle d'Aubigné, Gaussen, and a multitude of other authors, were professional teachers.

7. It assists our Churches, when they become vacant, in obtaining pastors of the requisite qualifications. Where do our Churches generally look but to the Seminary at Princeton, and to similar Institutions?

In short, our Theological Seminaries are the strongest grounds of hope, connected with human instrumentality, in reference to the prosperity of the Church and its extension in our own and other lands. The objects of the Institution at Princeton, it is believed, have hitherto been in a good degree accomplished. To God be the praise for His grace and His goodness!

II. History of the Seminary.—Prompted by considerations like the foregoing, the Fathers of the Presbyterian Church founded the Seminary at Princeton. Although there has never been a period when our ministers were not educated men, yet their opportunities for obtaining a professional education have varied according to circumstances. At first, Academies were established with a special view to an adequate preparation for the ministry. Of these the three most celebrated, were the "Log College" of Wm. Tennent, the Academy at Fogg's Manor, Pa., under Samuel Blair, and the Academy at Newark, Del., under the care of the Philadelphia Synod. Soon afterwards, in 1746, Princeton *College* was founded, a leading design of which was to afford the advantages of a full course of studies to candidates for the ministry. An effort was early made to establish a Professorship of Divinity in connexion with the College; but this was unsuccessful. It was the usual custom for students to complete their studies under the superintendence, for a short time, of a private minister. Experience, however, proved that individual enterprise, besides being comparatively irresponsible, was on the whole inadequate for the great work of training up the ministers of the Church. The necessity of a Theological Seminary was felt by many of our wisest and best men, long before it was established. Finally, in 1809 the proposal was made by the Presbytery of Philadelphia to the General Assembly, to found an Institution for the more thorough education of candidates for the ministry. The Assembly referred the subject to the Presbyteries, who reported in 1810 in favour of the proposition; and in 1811 the Assembly adopted the plan of a Theological Seminary, which in 1812 was located in Princeton,* and immediately commenced its operations.

The Professorships.—In 1812, the Rev. Archibald Alexander, D. D., pastor of the Third Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, was

* The Seminary is entirely distinct from the College. It has separate Professors, buildings, trustees, students, &c. The two institutions are about a quarter of a mile apart.

inaugurated Professor of Didactic and Polemic Theology. In 1813, the Rev. Samuel Miller, D. D., pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, New-York, was inaugurated Professor of Ecclesiastical History and Church Government. In 1819, the Rev. Charles Hodge was appointed an Instructor in the Seminary, and in 1822 was inaugurated Professor of Biblical and Oriental Literature. In 1836, the Rev. John Breckenridge was inaugurated Professor of Pastoral Theology and Missionary Instruction; and in 1838, the Rev. J. Addison Alexander was inaugurated Professor of Oriental and Biblical Literature. The Rev. Dr. Breckenridge resigned in 1838, and his Professorship was merged in the others. By an arrangement satisfactory to all parties, Dr. Alexander's Professorship was changed to Pastoral and Polemic Theology, and that of Dr. Hodge to Exegetical and Didactic Theology. At the present time, therefore, there are four Professors in the Seminary.

Buildings.—The Seminary Edifice was commenced immediately after the war in 1815, and was first occupied in 1817. It is a stone building of good appearance, 150 feet long, 50 feet wide, four stories high, and with accommodations for 80 or 90 students. Three houses for the Professors, a Chapel and a Library edifice of a fine architectural character have been erected at different periods. The Library edifice and one of the Professor's houses are the gifts of a well known friend of the Seminary.

Library.—The books, belonging to the Institution, are about 9000 volumes, a considerable part of which were the donation of the Rev. Dr. Green. The library contains many valuable works, but needs a large addition to its resources, in order to make it conform to the general aims and requirements of a central Theological Seminary. At present, the most defective part of the Seminary is its library.

Number of Students.—The Seminary opened in 1812 with three students. The next year it had eight. The number has gradually increased, though with some variations. At the present time, there are 131 students on its catalogue, the largest number ever in the Institution. Since its origin, the number of students who have enjoyed the advantages of its instructions is about 1400.

Scholarships.—The number of scholarships belonging to the Seminary is 27. These are the donations of various benevolent individuals, whose names they bear; and constitute a fund, the interest of which assists in the support of indigent students. The sum of $2500 is necessary to found a scholarship. Almost all the scholarships, however, now fall short of the required amount.

Funds of the Seminary.—Singular as it may appear, it is nevertheless true, that this great and important institution has never yet been adequately endowed. Although established nearly thirty-five years ago, it has had to depend, in a great measure, upon the contingencies of annual contributions. Various efforts have been made to secure its permanent endowment; at first, by raising a general

fund; then by securing three Professorships from different synods, in 1821; and more lately by establishing the additional Professorship. During the interval of these various efforts up to the present time, a resort to annual collections has been necessary to meet the current expenses. The funds of the Seminary have suffered a considerable loss by investments in Southwestern Bank Stock.* The following table shows their present value, and the sum necessary to be raised for the endowment of the Institution:

TABULAR STATEMENT OF FUNDS.

	Present value estimated.	Sum to be raised.	When full.
Professorships,	60,700	64,300	125,000
Scholarships,	38,800	28,200	67,000
	99,500	92,500	192,000

In addition to the $92,000 required to be raised for Professorships and Scholarships, $5000 are necessary for the current expenses of the Institution during the interval; and $2500 *at least* are required to purchase books for the library. This would make the whole amount to be raised about $100,000; which is not a large sum when we look at the objects to which it is to be applied.

The whole sum, necessary for the endowment of the Professorships, is stated at $125,000. This, at 6 per ct., including charges for investments, commissions, &c., would be barely sufficient to yield the stipulated salaries, which amount to $7200; or $1800 to each Professor.

Some persons have suggested that the salaries of the Professors are too large. The agent feels it to be his duty and his privilege to defend the plan of the Seminary against objections, which seem to arise from unreasonable or contracted views; and therefore submits the following considerations in reference to the salaries tendered by the Institution.

1. The salaries have been formally and deliberately fixed, at different times, for each Professorship, by the General Assembly; which, embodying the wisdom of the whole Church, has taken action on this subject, in full view of all the circumstances of the case.

2. The present Professors, and those who may be called to succeed them, might readily command a much larger sum in different positions of the Church. In a worldly point of view, their connexion with the Seminary is a matter of self-denial. If the two senior Professors had retained their pastoral relations, they would have been far better off in their old age, than the Church has allowed them to be. And so it probably will ever be with the Professors of this Institution.

* All moneys raised by the present effort, are to be invested on bond and mortgage. Without this understanding the present agent would never have consented to act.

3. The general reputation and credit of the Presbyterian Church are interested in the respectable support of its Seminary. This is not a local Institution, but belongs to a wealthy, numerous and liberal Church.

4. The expenses of maintenance, with the exception of rent, are as great in Princeton as in the neigbouring cities; and it is well known that the incumbents have never accumulated property from their income.

5. The labors of the Professors are arduous. In addition to the daily duties of the Seminary, they preach almost every Sabbath; and are constantly doing important work of a ministerial as well as miscellaneous character, in addition to their employments as Professors.

Besides all this, the salaries are *stipulated to be paid;* and the Churches are bound in honour as well as in conscience, not to repudiate the acts of their own General Assembly. The truth is, if there are any men who have claims upon the respect, gratitude, support, and general sympathies of the people of God, they are our Theological Professors, whose persevering, self-denying, and useful lives are devoted in the most effective manner to the advancement of the cause of Christ throughout the world.

Some persons object to permanent endowments; but if they will ensure the success of any other plan to sustain a Theological Seminary, they will do a favour by making it public. It must be remembered that the instructions in all Theological Seminaries, (it is different in *Colleges*,) are entirely gratuitous; and hence the Professors must be supported in some way by the Church itself. The plan of annual collections has been proved by experience to be annoying to the Churches, fluctuating, and insufficient. A necessity exists for a more sure method of providing for the maintenance of the Institution. The only feasible plan known is that adopted by all our Theological Seminaries, of obtaining a permanent endowment.

III. Claims of the Seminary upon the Churches.—The time has arrived when the Churches must decide whether this excellent but long-harassed Institution shall be sustained or not. A few motives to enforce the claims for its endowment are herewith presented.

1. Our Seminary at Princeton, in connexion with kindred Institutions, is the *main reliance of* the Presbyterian Church. If we undo the work of our fathers by suffering this School of the Prophets to decline, we shall bitterly lament the short-sighted policy which dictated its overthrow. To you, who enjoy the blessings of an educated ministry—who love the doctrines taught in the Confession of Faith and Westminster Catechisms—who prize the simplicity of a Church Government which gives pastors and elders to the people—and who rejoice in the heritage, which your fathers transmitted in the Gospel succession of truth and piety—to you is the appeal made to come to the rescue of Presbyterian Institutions. The Seminary

is identified with all our hopes and prospects, as a Church of Christ. Sustain it, and, with the blessing of God, our congregations will be supplied with a ministry, qualified for and devoted to their work—a ministry such as is demanded by the wants of our own people, the exigencies of threatening times, and the interest of evangelical religion, "always, every where, and by all."

2. *The character and reputation of the Presbyterian Church are more or less involved in the issues of the present appeal.* Shall it be said of us, "They began to build, and were not able to finish"? It would be a sad reproach to a Church as wealthy as ours, to refuse to endow the Institution which trains up its ministers. We have already the reproach that our Seminary, although founded thirty-three years ago, is still begging around the Churches. Let this painful stigma upon our denomination be removed by a general and successful response to the present effort.

3. *Presbyterians have ever borne their testimony to the importance of education in this country, especially the education of ministers of the Gospel.* Our Seminary is a witness of our opinions on this subject. It contains all the substantial elements of a comprehensive and wisely planned Theological Institution. It shows what our fathers thought and what they did in behalf of learning and religion. If all was not done that might have been done, it is high time it should not be left undone any longer. Other denominations are advancing rapidly in their zeal and interest in the cause of education. This is not the period for Presbyterians to falter. If our destiny is onward, our Seminary must not be downward. How can we, as a Church, very consistently profess to be in favour of an educated ministry, if we at the same time refuse to place our Theological Institution on a basis of permanent prosperity?

4. To endow the Seminary *would really be a relief to the Churches.* While it would be their privilege to establish the Institution on a permanent basis, it would also be a gain to themselves; for an endowment would supersede the necessity of annual collections, and reiterated demands. Our annual contributions for the Seminary are becoming more and more unpopular; and it must be so as long as they are mementoes of neglected duty. If the effort, now made throughout the Churches, be successful, there will not only be satisfaction in being relieved from a yearly appeal, but a much deeper and truer interest for the Seminary will exist than formerly. Duty, rightly discharged, brings its own reward; and a successful effort in a good cause is the stimulant of true devotion in the hearts of its friends. The Churches, on the other hand, must remember that, if they now fail to endow the Seminary, they will be called upon by the General Assembly, year after year, and will have to discharge in another form an unwelcome duty, which would be a pleasure if done at once.

5. The permanent endowment of the Seminary is *due to the Professors themselves.* Called as they have been by the voice of the

Church to superintend its most important trusts, they have a right to the maintenance pledged by its highest ecclesiastical authority. Instead of being subjected to the humiliation of annual appeals in their behalf, which vary like the rise and fall of stocks, they ought to have the certain and comfortable prospect afforded by the provision of a permanent endowment. The Presbyterian Church ought surely to discharge its temporal obligations to men who have educated 1400 ministers—who have themselves been engaged unremittingly in preaching the Gospel—and who have given to the world the additional benefit of their labours, in the form of various treatises, tracts and commentaries on the most important topics in the word of God.

The power of our Church in the evangelization of the world, as well as its fame at home and abroad, is in a good degree due, so far as instrumentality is concerned, to our Seminary at Princeton. The honoured names of its Professors, who have assisted in producing these results, ought to rally the Churches, with a hearty effort, to sustain the Institution over which they preside.

6. One more motive to assist in the present undertaking, is the *blessing of God upon the Institution and its Alumni.* Few institutions have probably been more useful, in any land or in any age, than the Theological Seminary at Princeton. Its students have occupied prominent positions in our country. They are now engaged in preaching the Gospel in most of the principal cities, towns, villages, and neighbourhoods, in the Middle, Southern, and Western States. Their voice is heard in Albany, Troy, Schenectady, New-York, Brooklyn, Paterson, Newark, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Norfolk, Richmond, Petersburg, Fayetteville, Charleston, Mobile, New-Orleans, Natchez, Louisville, Cincinnati, St. Louis, &c., &c. Princeton ministers have organized and built up many hundreds of Churches. They have been the means of saving many thousands of immortal souls. They have been the friends of pure revivals of religion and of benevolent enterprises. They have been the opponents of error, and especially of Popery, in all its forms and modifications. They have exerted an extensive, salutary and evangelical influence upon the general interests of religion throughout our own and other countries.* Europe, Asia, Africa, America, and the islands of the sea, can all bear some testimony to their enterprise and zeal. The heathen can rise up and call them blessed. Princeton students are missionaries in many lands. The sun of heaven never sets upon their labours. The great Head of the Church has owned and blessed their work in a manner that demands devout acknowledgment and praise.

In conclusion, the hope is entertained that the friends of learn-

* Some of the most useful ministers of the *Dutch Reformed Church* received their instructions at Princeton. For example, *Dr. How, Dr. Strong, Dr. Vermilye, Dr. Bethune, Dr. Hutton, the Rev. Duncan Kennedy, the Rev. John M. Mac Auley. Bishop McIlvaine,* of Ohio, and *Bishop Johns,* of Va., were also members of the Seminary.

ing and religion will not allow this important Institution to decline. It is the largest Theological Seminary in the United States, and with the exception of Andover, it is the oldest. Whilst Andover has permanent funds to the amount of nearly half a million, shall Princeton be denied its far humbler endowment? Shall it, or shall it not, be sustained upon a basis of permanent prosperity, corresponding to its character, its importance and the obligations of the Church? Presbyterians, the answer is with you!

NOTICE.

Some who have subscribed largely to the Seminary, have preferred to pay the interest annually, reserving the privilege of paying the principal at their convenience. Others have paid at the time of subscribing. Subscribers will, of course, do as they deem best; but where the subscriptions are not large, immediate payment would facilitate the objects of the agency.

When the work of the agency is completed, a catalogue of the names and donations will be sent to each subscriber. This will be equivalent to a receipt from the Trustees, and an acknowledgment that the various sums have been applied to the purposes intended. The sum proposed to be raised being large, such a course is due to the Agents and Trustees as well as the donors.

DATE DUE